

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**IRAN'S NUCLEAR STRATEGY OPTIONS  
AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

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This work explores Iran's apparent attempt to develop a nuclear weapons option. Iran has acquired considerable nuclear expertise in recent years through overt and covert activities, including civilian nuclear cooperation with Russia and likely connections with elements of Pakistan's nuclear weapons establishment. Some of these activities are counter to Western nonproliferation expectations, worrisome for stability in the greater Middle East, and dangerous for long-term U.S. strategic interests. Iran's movement toward a nuclear weapon option creates complex issues for American national security policy makers and highlights the international community's inability to police rogue states effectively. This research examines Iran's nuclear program and assesses the merits and risks of various U.S. policy options in response. It also argues that Iran's nuclear intent has produced unique opportunities for U.S. foreign policy makers to shape international norms in support of U.S. interests.



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## IRAN'S NUCLEAR STRATEGY OPTIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The continuing spread of nuclear weapons will increase the likelihood of this kind of frightening possibility: small states can be more easily invaded by nuclear neighbors, since that neighbor may believe that its new weapons will deter intervention by outside powers.<sup>1</sup>

- Scott D. Sagan

### WHY IRAN

The discovery of Iran's nuclear program and its recent failure to comply fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Safeguards Agreements has pushed Iran to the center of international attention.<sup>2</sup> Despite denials, Iran's delays in explaining inconsistencies in IAEA findings and safeguards raises alarms that its nuclear efforts are being diverted to weapons development.<sup>3</sup> To gain an appreciation for Iran's approach to nuclear weapons, one needs only to look at the geopolitical environment of Southwest Asia and the greater Middle East. To the East, Iran finds two nuclear powers in India and Pakistan whose mutual enmity could have disastrous consequences. Given its acrimonious history with the United States and with U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran is increasingly concerned about U.S. influence in the region. Add nuclear-armed Israel to the situation and Iran suddenly finds itself in a hostile environment with credible influence waning and increasing isolation.<sup>4</sup> As the world suddenly finds itself taking note of Iran's legal and illicit attempts to gain nuclear capabilities, questions arise as to the effectiveness of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in prohibiting unsanctioned nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear weapons remain one of the most dangerous threats to world survival. Organized a little over three decades ago, the NPT established an important international security framework.<sup>5</sup> It limited the actions of nuclear weapons states (NWS), restrained non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) from acquiring nuclear weapons, and framed other cooperative agreements to control proliferation.<sup>6</sup> The recent increase in the number of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) related crises, such as those with Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and Iran suggest a stressed nonproliferation regime.<sup>7</sup> Only as good as its member states, the NPT requires steadfast commitment to its charter and policing mechanisms.

Western nations expect NPT signatories to comply with the safeguards as set forth by the IAEA. It is a binding U.N. treaty agreed to voluntarily and subject to international norms. Most of the world has agreed that promoting peaceful nuclear capabilities for economic benefit best serves humankind as evidenced by their signatures to the NPT. However, discovery of attempts to use peaceful nuclear programs to create nuclear weapons has more than just revealed the

scope of illicit activities. It has forced the world to acknowledge that irresponsible nations and terrorists may synchronize their activities to acquire nuclear capabilities. This terrorist aspect of nuclear proliferation directly affronts international norms and causes great alarm.

This work explores Iran's apparent attempt to develop a nuclear weapons option. Iran has acquired considerable nuclear expertise in recent years through overt and covert activities, including civilian nuclear cooperation with Russia and likely connections with elements of Pakistan's nuclear weapons establishment. Some of these activities are counter to Western nonproliferation expectations, worrisome for stability in the greater Middle East, and dangerous for long-term U.S. strategic interests. Iran's movement toward a nuclear weapon option creates complex issues for American national security policy makers and highlights the international community's inability to police rogue states effectively. This research examines Iran's nuclear program and assesses the merits and risks of various U.S. policy options in response. It also argues that Iran's nuclear intent has produced unique opportunities for U.S. foreign policy makers to shape international norms in support of U.S. interests.

### **IRAN'S OVERT AND COVERT NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES**

In the 1960's the United States built Iran, then a U.S. ally led by Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, a five megawatt-thermal research reactor at the Tehran Research Center. The United States also trained Iranian technicians under the IAEA nonproliferation umbrella.<sup>8</sup> With relations declining with the United States, Iran sought out other sources of expertise and materials to advance its nuclear ambitions. Aided by Germany, construction began in 1974 on the Bushehr nuclear reactor complex. It ended in 1979, however, because of the Iranian Revolution.<sup>9</sup> In the mid-1980s China quietly became Iran's principal nuclear supplier by providing a small electromagnetic isotope separation machine and a 30-kilowatt thermal research reactor.<sup>10</sup> During the 1990s, Russia provided additional reactors and laser-isotope separation technology.<sup>11</sup>

Iran's activities began to draw worldwide attention including the IAEA Board of Governors, which met on 18 June 2004 to discuss open Iranian issues. Sixth in a series of meetings, this one began with the Director General's assessment that Iran was not fully, timely, or proactive in its cooperation with the IAEA and that with the passage of time, the international community would not be sufficiently assured of Iran's nuclear activities.<sup>12</sup> The Iranians with their current diplomatic posturing, concessions, and scoffing at the IAEA are certainly working to keep the issues below the level of a Security Council Resolution. By avoiding direct confrontation with the IAEA and directly countering U.S. opposition, Iran might succeed in creating divisions on the

Board of Governors allowing it to acquire nuclear weapons. Its direct approach to limit U.S. influence and further the Iranian nuclear agenda may have worked as the IAEA now intends to follow up on the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations as a routine matter.<sup>13</sup> The final IAEA decision has important implications for the ruling regime's legitimacy within Iran. Its governing mullahs can ill afford the international and domestic political and economic fallout should the Security Council impose sanctions because of the potential to legitimize current U. S. sanctions already in place.

Director General of the IAEA Mohammad El Baradei's report to the Board of Governors in November 2004 outlined Iran's safeguards breaches. These included possible concealment activities as indicated by the removal of buildings from the Lavisan-Shian site in Tehran. Inspectors also noted discrepancies in Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) and High Enriched Uranium (HEU) contamination when compared to the Iranian provided explanations as to the source. Overall the report questioned the nature and scope of Iran's centrifuge program as implausible based on the explanations provided by Iran.<sup>14</sup> What these technical violations of the NPT mean for Iran-U.S. relations remains open, but Iran's behavior in this regard is causing Western nations to reevaluate NPT effectiveness in today's environment.

#### COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA

Iran's search for nuclear capabilities provided Russia a much sought after market for an ailing economy. Iran signed an \$800 million agreement with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) to restart construction of the Bushehr reactor complex on Iran's Persian Gulf coast.<sup>15</sup> Iraq bombed the site repeatedly during its 1980-88 war with Iran and afterwards heavy U. S. pressure on suppliers forced suspension of the project.<sup>16</sup> U.S. intelligence sources later revealed more to the Iran-Russian deal than just construction. Reportedly the Russians agreed to train Iranian specialists, provide mining assistance, and supply Iran with a gas-centrifuge uranium enrichment facility. Discussions also included the possibility of Russia providing Iran with 2,000 metric tons of natural uranium and a research reactor.<sup>17</sup> While many news reports centered on the reactor, the most important Iranian advances may likely come from the exchange of experts. Russia's training of Iranian scientists will decrease the time required for Iran to master the nuclear fuels manufacturing process and other critical technologies. In turn this knowledge will reduce Iran's reliance on outside sources and vulnerabilities to exposure.<sup>18</sup> Western attempts to gain insights into the Iranian program will become more difficult and increase suspicion about Iranian intentions. This change will allow Iran gradually to become self-sufficient in the fuels process while reducing visibility to the outside world. If it achieves its

goals, Iran will also reduce internal dependency on oil giving it more product to market, thus increasing revenues.

Indicative of technical difficulties and economic realities, Russia in 2003 proposed to build a second facility rather than finishing Bushehr.<sup>19</sup> The United States attempted to stall the agreement by providing what it considered sufficient evidence of Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions to Russia. Alexander Rumyantsev, head of Minatom, brushed off the information stating that Bushehr "...is not a source of proliferation of nuclear material."<sup>20</sup> Yet Russia later admitted that Iran had actively attempted to gain access to Russian technology and some individual Russian specialists may have worked on Iranian missile programs.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Russia did not expose Iranian attempts until after confrontation raises considerable suspicion as to the true nature of Russia-Iranian relations. Both Iran and Russia are seeking to improve economic conditions within their respective borders rendering technological transfers economically tempting to both. Beginning in 1997, U.S. news began citing U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sources of ongoing discussions between Russian agencies and Iran over sale of a uranium conversion facility, a heavy water reactor, and contracts for a uranium mine.<sup>22</sup> The United States subsequently administered sanctions against the Russian companies involved for their proliferation efforts. Yet Russia persists in providing nuclear technology to developing countries for financial gain and, as some have maintained, because of lax enforcement of export rules.<sup>23</sup> Russia may one day regret its failure to provide adequate oversight of its nuclear exports and controls if, for example, a Chechen terrorist acquires a nuclear device.

#### CONNECTIONS WITH PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR ESTABLISHMENT

According to Douglas Jehl, the CIA succeeded in infiltrating Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear proliferation network over a period of years.<sup>24</sup> The detection of Khan's clandestine network helped expose the extent of the proliferation problem around the world and illustrated the ability of Khan to distribute nuclear expertise and technology across international borders.<sup>25</sup> To comprehend the challenges of Khan's transnational efforts it is necessary to gain familiarity with his ability to transcend borders. Khan reportedly began clandestine efforts to produce fissile material using information from Uranium Enrichment Company (URENCO) suppliers brought out of the Netherlands. In 1976 two Dutch firms exported 6,200 unfinished steel rotor tubes to Pakistan.<sup>26</sup> These centrifuge components arrived in Pakistan so close to Khan's departure from URENCO that they should have aroused suspicions that preplanned insider activity may have occurred. The coincidental arrival also raised security concerns for

URENCO. Within the next five years Pakistan would complete its uranium enrichment plant under Khan's control. In 1986 then Pakistani military ruler GEN Zia-ul-Haq foreshadowed Pakistan's intent to proliferate when he proclaimed Pakistan's right to obtain nuclear technology followed by the intent to share it with the Islamic world.<sup>27</sup>

In 2001, as John Pike reports, Khan's career as Pakistan's lead nuclear expert abruptly ended following U.S. warnings of his involvement in proliferation efforts. President Musharraf removed him under the guise of proclaiming financial improprieties yet kept him on as a special advisor.<sup>28</sup> Pakistan was concerned that its clandestine efforts as a non-member of the NPT might spurn world opinion against it affecting its access to financial aid. Pakistan was successful in avoiding serious world scrutiny by taking advantage of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. As reported by Husain Haqqani, a journalist and former advisor to Pakistani prime ministers, Pakistan aided anti-Soviet insurgents against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan by providing staging bases.<sup>29</sup> The United States responded with technical assistance to Pakistan. The ensuing reduction in tensions between Pakistan and the United States facilitated an environment whereby Pakistan could quietly develop its nuclear program. It is ironic the Islamic militancy in Pakistan now claims a role in protecting Pakistan's nuclear program.<sup>30</sup> One could argue here that Pakistan's government is more dangerous to proliferation efforts than that of Iran. These attempts to avoid IAEA scrutiny coupled with Pakistan's overt support of proliferation efforts should have placed the West, distracted by events in Afghanistan, on notice. Connecting the Islamic militancy within Pakistan to the forces within Iran potentially creates an explosive force with which the United States may one day have to contend. If successful, a militant connection will require the United States to reconsider its relationship with Pakistan, increasing tensions with an ally currently supporting U.S. efforts in the war on terror.

Libya provides another example of the Khan network. United States pressure on Libya after interception of a German registered ship enroute to that country reportedly produced Libyan admission of millions of dollars in payments to the Khan network. The discovery implicated not only Libya, Iran, and Pakistan, but suggested that the network extended as far as North Korea.<sup>31</sup> The interception and subsequent investigation also exposed the magnitude of the Khan network to the entire world. Libya's admission of Iran's culpability, forced Iran to admit Khan's assistance.<sup>32</sup>

While the actual beginning of Iran's association with Khan remains unknown, in 2004 Pakistan acknowledged that two of its scientists including Khan assisted Iran during the 1980s.<sup>33</sup> Together the reports signify Iran's implication in these covert efforts and further suggest it may be moving toward a nuclear weapon option.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the IAEA increased its

focus on Iran's program. The ensuing Director General's November 2004 report to the Board of Governors on Iran's implementation of IAEA safeguards includes a chronological list of discrepancies, delays, and still unresolved issues with the program.<sup>35</sup> The regime's success to that point hallmarks the failure of current IAEA rules to afford some measure of confidence in its ability to safeguard national security throughout the world. Until the IAEA gains unfettered access to the world's nuclear sites, doubts will continue to generate speculation on potential adversary intent.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND STABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Iran's belief in the unfair application of the NPT to itself and other Muslim nations has some merit. It provides political will and national legitimacy for Iran to use all instruments of power to acquire a nuclear deterrent capability. World attention to other endeavors enabled nations such as Iran to continue quietly their proliferation efforts under the guise of peaceful use. At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference pledges by nations to deal with Israel's nuclear program, non-nuclear clear zones, and nuclear weapon states disarmament went largely unsatisfied.<sup>36</sup> The President of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, H.E. Reza Aghazadeh, in his address to the IAEA General Conference on 16 September 2002 reminded the world of Iran's call for a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East and of the IAEA failure to hold Israel accountable.<sup>37</sup> Considering that estimates of Israeli weapons are in the area of between 100-200 weapons, Iranian security concerns appear to be justified.<sup>38</sup> This aids Iran's position because for Iran and the rest of the Islamic world Israel's nuclear weapons are a serious security threat.<sup>39</sup> Inaction by the IAEA on the Israeli issue continues to foster perceptions that Israel is above international law and maintains its preeminence at the behest of the United States. This perception will remain among Islamic nations until the United States decides to change it. The West's aversion to establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East adds negative speculation to Islamic confidence in IAEA ability to protect the Middle East from proliferation.<sup>40</sup> Without this confidence Iran may proceed on its own in search of nuclear options and raises the questions of who and how many more will soon follow.

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's Deputy Director General of International Affairs, addressed the Second Moscow International Proliferation Conference held 18-19 September 2003 and stated that the most serious challenges to global stability were: unilateralism, discrimination in the application of treaties, separation of non-proliferation and disarmament issues, and lack of incentives for those in compliance.<sup>41</sup> Soltanieh directly confronts U.S. influence in the region by presenting the U.S. position as an isolated view and not beneficial for the region. In late

November of the following year, the Board of Governors on 29 November 2004 clearly declared that Iran was not in compliance with IAEA mandates.<sup>42</sup> Iran's top nuclear official, Hassan Rowhani, spoke after the negotiated settlement with European Union nations (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) in November 2004 providing unambiguous warning of Iranian intent. He stated that Iran had proved the United States was lying about Iran's nuclear ambitions, but later indicated that Iran's voluntary suspension of nuclear enrichment activities would be temporary.<sup>43</sup> One may speculate on an Iranian belief that because some Europeans agreed to the deal, all of Europe must disagree with the United States. While this belief may not be credible in the West, it holds considerable hope for a fractured U.S.-European relationship within the Iranian community. Rowhani's statement manifests deeply ingrained intensity to counter U.S. opposition to Iran's nuclear program as part of a multifaceted approach by the Iranian government to discredit the United States. It also signals Iranian intent not to halt long-term processing of enriched uranium and inserts credible doubt as to Iran's nuclear weapons aspirations. Worrisome to U.S. interests are the potential impacts of Iran's success on other nations in the region.

As states interact within the NPT they create norms; when nations fail to set the example per the NPT safeguards, new norms are set. The United States and Russia have sent a message that non-compliance with Article VI, which stipulates good faith negotiations to cease the arms race and disarm, has become a norm.<sup>44</sup> Rational actors deduce that if it is acceptable to do away with Article VI, why not circumvent Article I or II? Iran's repeated efforts to illustrate nuclear weapons state dereliction on this issue is central to its efforts to counter U.S. influence at the IAEA. The United States is quick to point out discrepancies of lesser nations and slow to ensure its own activities are not fraught with contradiction. U.S. actions could be interpreted as control, not leadership. Nonetheless, the NPT has serious flaws in international law when nations do not comply. U.S. slowness to disarm and its decision not to rule out the future of tactical low-yield nuclear weapons provide but two examples. As a result, some Europeans view American policy as a contributor to proliferation and justification for others to desire nuclear weapons.<sup>45</sup>

As one of the more fungible elements of power, economic strength improves from sales in the highly lucrative market for nuclear technology. The United States and Canada's research reactor sale to India, France's reactor sale to Iraq, and Russia's reactor sale to Iran provide a few infamous examples, and there are numerous others.<sup>46</sup> The desire for profit pushes states to sell sensitive commodities that later may be misused to support weapons programs. It is possible that huge segments of the Iranian population will support nuclear programs for either



economic benefits or the deterrence benefit against the United States. If so, the political challenges to care for its internal needs thereby endearing the population to the theocracy create an advantage for U.S. policy makers. Whether Iran implodes, an outside power removes its regime, or the forces of connectivity and democratization triumph remains unknown. Proper application of U.S. diplomatic efforts is necessary to shape the volatile region to meet U.S. strategic goals.

Perceptions of inequitable application of the NPT safeguards contribute to regional instability as developing nations follow NWS lead in adhering only to safeguards of their choosing. Nuclear weapons states not complying with arms reductions, or at least addressing the difficulties involved in an international forum, add value to having nuclear weapons in the region. Fear of potential Israeli action encourages nations to hasten their efforts to protect themselves. If Iran succeeds in dividing the IAEA Board of Governors, it may embolden others to challenge U.S. influence in the region creating an increased potential for conflict. Conversely, the economic benefits to peaceful nuclear proliferation by free market flow creates a stabilizing effect in the region, assuming the country gaining nuclear technology will use it for peaceful purposes only.

#### **DANGERS TO U.S. INTERESTS**

The most obvious danger to the Western world is an Iranian nuclear device provided to a non-state actor willing to die for a cause. The inherent difficulty of developing strategies to counter terrorist threats is the most vexing issue of the day. Determining when and where the terrorist will strike requires an ability to locate them and gather reliable information that uniquely identifies the organization.

Iran certainly understands the negative political ramifications that would occur if the United States were to unleash nuclear weapons upon it. Iran may also believe that with nuclear weapons, it will be able to deter the United States from a conventional attack. Also feasible is an option that Iran can attack a neighbor, while deterring an attack upon itself with its nuclear weapons. A nuclear capable Iran will certainly cause U.S. policy makers to consider carefully the cost in national treasure before taking military action against Iran. Israel remains the most prominent threat to Iran and all of its Arab neighbors as long as it maintains unconditional U.S. support.<sup>47</sup> An Iranian nuclear threat directed to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) or the Organization of Petroleum States in an effort to control oil prices could upset the flow of oil through the region and have a dramatic impact on the world economy. Tehran could provide a nuclear device to Hezbollah or Hamas to carry out a threat or detonation. Terrorist aspiration to

use a nuclear device to influence the Israeli-Palestinian situation constitutes a grave danger to regional and world stability.

Regional crises in the past such as the Iraq-Iran War have interrupted infrastructure and distribution with adverse effects on world oil markets.<sup>48</sup> Once threatened, neighboring states such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey may be inclined to obtain nuclear options of their own. Proliferation to these states also represents an increase in the likelihood a device will be lost simply by the increase in numbers. Reports are already coming from Egypt that it has initiated a uranium research project which thus far appears to be civilian oriented.<sup>49</sup> Dr. A.Q. Khan's ties to Pakistan now linked to Iran and Libya begin to lend credence to Pakistani GEN Zia's declaration to provide nuclear technology to all Islamic states.<sup>50</sup> Regional states may succeed in obtaining nuclear options.

More nuclear weapons in a region of continuous instability does not bode well for the West. More favorable would be an Iran with nuclear weapons that changes course and becomes a model state in international order. The dangers to U.S. interests then are two fold: First, it will have modeled a successful campaign against the United States for other nations to emulate. Second, the unintended proliferation would vault Iran into the nuclear weapon state arena requiring U.S. officials to treat it with respect. The impact on U.S. influence is speculative at this time, but delays and increased diplomatic frictions are certain to affect U.S. influence in the region. Reducing diplomatic effectiveness may cause the United States to search for another power option such as the military to achieve its interests.

The Iranian problem has already stressed between U.S.-Europe relations. Around the world today, many espouse negative views of current U.S. international policies. European Union (EU) acknowledgement of the rifts between Europe and the United States indicate EU dissatisfaction with what Christina Chuen of the Monterey Institute of International Studies has perceived as irrational U.S. behavior.<sup>51</sup> If the Europeans see U.S. policy toward Iran as excessive, they may be willing to exercise their diplomatic and economic power even further than those recently consummated with Iran. China's recent Iranian contracts might also be viewed as a protectionist act that competes with U.S. interests. While U.S. policymakers may not agree that current U.S. policies are immoderate, it is not the prevalent U.S. view that counts. The willingness of friendly nations to work with Iran lends credence to the perception of immoderate U.S. reactions and undermines U.S. influence in the region.

In spite of U.S. attempts, Iran has succeeded in demonstrating U.S. ineffectiveness toward moderating its behavior. Iran sponsored Shiite Muslim extremist groups in failed attempts to coerce the GCC states during the 1980s and early 90s.<sup>52</sup> The U.S. Congress

recently extended 1996 legislation to punish Iran's terrorism support by enforcing sanctions.<sup>53</sup> In 2003 the Department of State listed Iran for the second year in a row as the most prolific state sponsor of terrorism for providing sanctuary to members of Al Qaeda, giving funds and training to Hamas, Hezbollah, and other terrorist groups; and assisting members of Ansar al Islam evade capture in Iraq.<sup>54</sup> Iran's behavior represents a distinct separation from nation state norms, yet it is using its most effective means of nation state power by finding indirect alternatives to U.S. obstacles. Should the Iranians begin to successfully work with the Europeans a more dangerous threat to U.S. interests would emerge. If they were to convince the International Court of Justice that U.S. activities were violations of state sovereignty and linked the Iranian population's struggles with U.S. imposed sanctions, the Iranian may succeed in fracturing an enduring U.S.-European relationship.

Adaptive nations have found ways to circumvent the rules perhaps using globalization's new information tools. Pakistan, India, and Israel have simply refused to sign the NPT. North Korea, once a NPT member, apparently developed nuclear capabilities clandestinely then legally withdrew after complying with IAEA notification procedures. Libya and Iran, many now believe, have intentionally deluded the IAEA of their intentions while others balk at increasing IAEA scrutiny of their own programs.<sup>55</sup> These few non-compliers illustrate the difficulty of safeguards when ambitious nations, given the chance to acquire a considerable improvement in state power, accept the offer. These nations are raising the specter of anarchy to a higher level. Additional crises add to the problems with which an already stressed U.S. military and intelligence apparatus have to contend. Many nations under U.S. leadership have signed on to the *Proliferation Security Initiative* to interrupt shipments of WMD and related materials flowing throughout the world.<sup>56</sup> Nations are acting alone or in concert with others creating the risk of sending the IAEA and the NPT regime into obscurity. These non-complying states are not new problems for the United States, but they do add urgency to the necessity of bringing the NPT up to date with accountability mechanisms and punitive awards for non-adherence.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

For the trans-Atlantic alliance, Iran's nuclear agenda has forged a consensus between the United States and Europe that preventing Iran's nuclear option is vitally important to both. Yet, they disagree in principal as to how to proceed. Within the EU, Europeans have not synchronized diplomatic efforts among themselves as they have recently discovered. Some EU countries are engaging Iran on trade and aid issues while separate negotiations are focusing on proliferation.<sup>57</sup> The Europeans must first figure out which voice they will use to address the

world. Then with unity of effort the United States and Europe will be more effective in prohibiting Iran and others from taking advantage of diplomatic tiffs as in the past.<sup>58</sup> Thus far the effect of Iran's proliferation efforts has provided both sides of the Atlantic a common view of the international nuclear environment from which to work.

From Iran's point of view its nuclear weapons program has nationalistic, economic, and prestige implications. Its aspirations to be a great nation or a regional power may be aided by the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Its nuclear programs provide jobs for Iranians and if successful, will enable Iran to reduce its internal dependence on oil. Iran is currently conducting crude oil swaps from the Caspian Sea using the lower quality oil internally and selling more of its own higher quality oil to world markets.<sup>59</sup> Accomplishing its nuclear program will free Iran to sell even more oil to world markets increasing goods and services to its people. Although short-term U.S. aid to Iran in this manner would likely not be acceptable to the U.S. Congress, a longer-term U.S. approach that assists Iran in this endeavor may pay dividends as Iran's internal dissidents gain power and eventually outlast the regime. Negative relations and sanctions from the United States have enabled Iran to sign deals with energy hungry China for huge quantities of oil and gas. China's 70 billion dollar energy deal arranged in October of 2004 may go up to 200 billion giving China cause to use its veto in the Security Council should the United States threaten sanctions in the future.<sup>60</sup> The positive aspects of China's deal for a reliable energy source are that future energy competition with the United States may not be as acrimonious. Much to China's dismay, its involvement in proliferation will also be subject to increased scrutiny. World unity might force China to the negotiating table where synchronizing its nuclear program with other nuclear weapons states will enable IAEA goal achievement to strengthen its safeguards and provide a unifying example for developing nations. World unity may be more difficult for the U.S. administration to achieve abroad than it appears.

The United States is now experiencing political backlash for its willingness to use force. European disagreements over the use of military force in Iraq have caused some frictions on both sides. Because one of the reasons presented for invading Iraq was its WMD, Europeans perceived the U.S. invasion as being misrepresented as no reports of WMD presence have surfaced. Europe views the use of military force as a destabilizing factor around the world causing the United States to lose significant diplomatic influence in that region.<sup>61</sup> Often characterized as imperialistic, the United States seems to move about the world oblivious to the subtle clues that would facilitate its use of other elements of power. By contrast, Europe focuses on other elements of power first out of necessity with little deployable military power but also because it has learned the art of diplomacy from U.S. stability provided since the end of World

War II. Now that the European Union is flexing democratic processes to shape the environment, the United States has taken a caustic approach to its methods. The U.S. attack on the very methods it has fought so hard to instill is contradictory policy and undermines U.S. credibility within the European Union. Strengthening the continuing relationship between the United States and Europe is therefore vital to U.S. security interests as the guarantors of democratic process around the world.

The EU has greater concern for successful negotiations with Iran than the United States due to proximity to the Iranian WMD launch sites. Harsh treatment of other nation's statesmen in front of world organizations will not force or manufacture what we seek to accomplish internationally in our efforts to ensure peace in the world. If the United States still wishes to be the world's lead advocate in international law it must build supporting mechanisms to strengthen its approach. Fostering human rights begins with equitable treatment of national representatives despite disagreements in policy and principle. Adherence to international agency decisions such as those made by the World Trade Organization would signal deference to international institutions adding legitimacy and strength to U.S. policy. If the United States shares a portion of its great power with lesser states, those that we assist will provide to us the goals we seek. A lead nation that manages by fear creates conditions fulfilled only when the leader is around. Once distracted, developing nations discard the leader's policies with disdain for their self-serving directions. The United States must resolve itself to the moral high ground, take responsibility for its own omissions, and once again lead world diplomatic efforts that have served it so well.

The United States and Russia have done little to bolster world confidence working towards nuclear disarmament. Between them one finds the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought U.S. assistance to account for and secure Russian tactical nuclear weapons that remained mostly in former Soviet Republics. The process by some estimates will take over 13 years to complete.<sup>62</sup> In the early 1990s the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction pledged over \$30 billion over ten years to countries such as Ukraine to give up WMD. The United States is also encouraging aid to the nations of Belarus and Kazakhstan for their disarmament efforts.<sup>63</sup> These admirable efforts move the issues away from the IAEA whose charter it is to monitor and report on national efforts to control proliferation.

The 1994 bilateral treaty between the United States and North Korea, however, is an example of a nonproliferation agreement gone awry. Mutual misunderstandings, failed commitments, and continued missile proliferation doomed the agreement. *The Agreed*

*Framework* committed the United States to provide North Korea fuel oil pending U.S. completion of two proliferation resistant nuclear power reactors. In exchange North Korea would give up its efforts to reprocess spent nuclear fuel and create weapons grade material.<sup>64</sup> These two examples illustrate the frustrating environment in which nations are attempting to patch NPT shortfalls. Recent calls to implement additional safeguards have largely gone unnoticed. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Additional Protocol Strengthening Safeguards agreed to in 1997 added additional safeguards, but less than 30 percent of the NPT parties have ratified it, the United States included.<sup>65</sup>

Having determined that nuclear proliferation is important to national interests, some states are choosing to act in concert with others unconstrained by the consensus requirements of the nonproliferation regime. This activity itself is a good indicator of the need to revise the NPT. The United States can show leadership here by allowing Russia to lead continuing efforts to locate, account for, and secure nuclear weapons in the former Soviet states. It can strongly support a Russian lead in creating bilateral agreements to reduce significantly the nuclear arms of both countries. The United States can invite China, the United Kingdom, Israel, Pakistan, India and France to participate in genuine negotiations fostering cooperation. These efforts will positively demonstrate to Iran that its view of the United States not being in compliance with the NPT is not valid while removing any legitimacy questions. Taking the lead on nuclear disarmament will provide assurances to Russia as to U.S. intent and provide opportunities to close NPT loopholes that facilitate nuclear proliferation.

Beginning with the next safeguards conference, the United States should build consensus to close the loopholes in the NPT treaty. There are indications now the U.S. administration intends to close the loopholes that allow nations to participate in peaceful programs, opt out of the treaty, and then develop a nuclear weapon. But instead of renegotiating the NPT, the United States wants the treaty rewritten without a vote producing a document that coincides with its original purpose of ensuring international security.<sup>66</sup> Consensus will not come cheaply and is likely to incite great debate among treaty members on the proposed change to the NPT. It may require the United States to reign in Israel. Israel is going to have to open its facilities and materials to safeguards, just as Iran. Israel will not have to give up its weapons, but it will have to become a participating member of the NPT. Pending completion of a revised Israeli security strategy, the United States must be prepared to offer significant additional security guarantees. If Israel is willing to solve its long-term security issues, declaring its nuclear weapons and joining the NPT is a start. Iran and many of its neighbors have on paper committed to a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East. Israel's entry into disarmament talks will demonstrate

progress to Islamic nations and lessen their security concerns. If the world finds a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the Israeli nuclear program under the NPT will be a subject for upcoming Islamic debates. Finally, until restoration U.S. diplomatic prestige, the United States should continue to follow and support the EU in its negotiations with Iran to bring that country back into compliance with NPT safeguards.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>10</sup> Albright, Internet; accessed 19 December 2004.

<sup>11</sup> William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, "As Nuclear Secrets Emerge, More Are Suspected," *New York Times*, 26 December 2004, sec. A, p.12.

<sup>12</sup> El Baradei, 1.

<sup>13</sup> El Baradei, 10.

<sup>14</sup> El Baradei, 2-8.

<sup>15</sup> Wehling, 136.

<sup>16</sup> Energy Information Administration Country Analysis Brief. *Iran*, August 2004; available from <<http://www.eia.doc.gov/emeu/cabs/iran.html>>; Internet; accessed 10 December 2004. Hereafter referred to as EIS: Iran.

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